



Grade 1 Snapshot

Orange Public Schools

Mary L. Tracy School
Peck Place School
Race Brook School
Turkey Hill School

Dear Parents,

The First Grade classroom is an exciting place. Children are working on a variety of skills that spiral through curriculum standards in all academic areas. This document provides you with a glimpse, or 'snapshot,' of the skills, knowledge, and concepts taught by year's end. Curriculum development is a continuously evolving process that requires ongoing commitment through professional development opportunities and collaborative grade-level team meetings. This year we are focusing on implementing our new math curriculum, *Math Expressions*, with consistency and fidelity. As a Professional Learning Community, we also strive to promote a safe learning environment for your child. We encourage healthy living habits and good decision-making to ensure all students become productive and contributing members of our global society.

It is our hope that in partnership with you and the wider community, we will provide our students with the motivation and means to excel and become life-long learners. Please continue to provide a variety of opportunities to reinforce your child's developing skills in order to bridge the connection between school and home.

The First Grade Team

A Typical Day

A first grader's day is indeed a very busy one. It includes two to three hours of Language Arts (reading, writing, and spelling) and one hour of math. The remainder of the day integrates and extends these two basic skills – literacy and math -- into science, social studies, character education, and health. In addition, students participate in physical education, music, art, library, and computer classes, and begin their first year of Spanish. Daily, there is a supervised recess and lunch. For specific times and routines please contact the classroom teacher.

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The foundation of Orange's philosophy is currently grounded in the Connecticut State Frameworks in most curricular areas. The transition to the National Common Core Standards has already begun in Math, with the purchase of our new curriculum, and in Language Arts. The Orange curriculum expectations, however, extend beyond the State and National frameworks to include many diverse enrichment opportunities. The result is students who are richly involved in their learning, preparing them now and for the future.

Language Arts Philosophy

Our Language Arts program is comprehensive and balanced. It integrates reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and thinking. Because of this integration, it serves as the foundation for all other areas of the curriculum.

We recognize that children have specific needs, strengths, and weaknesses. They must be taught at their independent instructional levels. This allows for children to meet their potential. Thus, on-going assessment is ever present and provides valuable information which informs instruction and intervention so that continuous progress can be made.

The Language Arts program uses a variety of authentic, rich, and interesting texts to teach both word analysis skills and comprehension strategies. This instruction in skills and strategies began in Kindergarten and is extended and strengthened as children progress through the grades.

Writing is viewed in the same manner. Children are taught to understand the writing process to use writing to address a variety of purposes, modes, and audiences. The primary goal of the program calls for students to become effective readers, writers, and communicators who are also reflective and critical thinkers. It requires students to become independent in literacy and thus helps to develop a life-long love of reading.

Learning to read and to write is a developmental process. As children progress through the grades, literacy demands will increase.

Reading and Responding

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a desire to read a variety of materials
- Apply phonological skills and their phonemic awareness (blending sounds, rhyming words, vowel and consonant sounds, segmenting words into syllables)
- Apply strategies for decoding words (picture clues, thinking about what makes sense, phonetic make-up, skip the word, and read to the end of the sentence listening for what sounds right, read it again, look for vowel patterns or chunks)
- Apply strategies for comprehension (picture clues, context clues, predicting, figuring out, use of prior knowledge, self-correcting)
- Respond to and extend the story (picturing, connecting the text to themselves and/or other literature and/or the world, wondering what if...?)
- Retell the story in sequence including character names and using important vocabulary from the text
- Develop good reading habits at home and at school
- Read fluently with good intonation

In Grade 1, children are immersed in and surrounded by print materials. Because of the developmental nature of reading and writing, a first grade class is composed of children at various levels within the world of literacy. Some students are still establishing early literacy skills; others are beginning to read, while some are reading connected text (more complex sentence structures) with ease. Teachers recognize and are prepared to meet these instructional demands. Instructional level is honored. The love of language is fostered through authentic activities. The connection between reading, oral language, spelling, and writing is solidified.

Communicating with Others

Students will be able to:

- Express thoughts clearly when speaking
- Participate in group discussions
- Listen while others speak

Homework

Teachers assign homework for a variety of purposes: to practice, reinforce, and extend learned skills; to integrate skills; to prepare for a lesson yet to be presented; and to encourage independent responsibility. The Orange Board of Education's policy states that students in Grade 1 should receive approximately 15 minutes of written homework three days per week. In addition, children should read for pleasure for at least 15 minutes every night.

Mathematics

Our goal is to explore Mathematics in both the concrete and abstract using the investigative process. It is our philosophy that students learn problem-solving and reasoning skills through the use of manipulatives, mental math, and computation. The mathematics focus is on four major content strands:

- Algebraic Reasoning: Patterns and Functions
- Numerical and Proportional Reasoning
- Working with Data: Probability and Statistics
- Geometry and Measurement

Mathematics for Grade 1 learners is a natural part of their world. Children will continue to build conceptual understanding and skills through meaningful experiences, actions, observations, and discussions.

In Grade 1, number sense is the main focus of study. Students are engaged in sorting, data collection, graphing activities, and problem-solving investigations for every topic of study. They learn that numbers and symbols can represent concrete objects and learn to show their thinking with pictures and mathematical notation. Topics include: number concepts, patterns, addition, subtraction, time, measurement, money, place value, geometry, and fractions. The use of manipulatives and communicating mathematical thinking to and among others are integral parts of each lesson.



Science

Our Science curriculum emphasizes a “mind-on, hands on” approach. Students learn through the inquiry/discovery model with an emphasis on problem-solving in the real world. A child's natural sense of curiosity is used to explore concepts based on the scientific principal of inquiry. Concepts explored in first grade include: the Life Cycle of Plants, the Sun, and the Seasons.

Social Studies

The newly-adopted Social Studies curriculum includes student learning activities that encourage interactive learning, higher-level thinking skills, and maximize student engagement. Lesson designs are creative and innovative, allowing students to think critically, set up and solve real-world problems, communicate with a variety of audiences, and use technology to strategically and effectively convey ideas.

Geography and map skills are integrated throughout the curriculum at each grade level. Throughout Grade 1, students will expand their understanding of their roles as members of a family and a larger community. Students will explore the common needs that make all people alike, and gain a deeper appreciation for differences. They will learn the importance of developing positive social interactive skills in order to work and make contributions as members of their family, classroom, school, and community.

Library

The Library Media program promotes the use of information for creative thinking and problem-solving while instilling the habit of reading for pleasure. Students will learn how to access, select, use, and evaluate information. Students will learn how to be effective users of all kinds of information, regardless of the format, by building upon their previously learned skills. In Grade 1, students will recognize a call number and begin to understand grouping of materials by call number. Students will understand and use vocabulary such as author, title, title page, illustrator, cover, and spine. Students will take part in discussions and will continue to use the Super3 problem-solving model introduced in Kindergarten

Physical Education

The Physical Education program has been developed following both National and State standards. Motor skills and physical fitness are developed in a sequential manner through a planned series of progressively developed activities.

Students are instilled with the concept of valuing physical fitness activities as they relate to leading a healthful lifestyle.

Concepts are introduced, reviewed, reinforced, enhanced, remediated and maintained as students work towards competency and proficiency. They include: exploring body and spatial awareness, demonstrating the ability to travel safely in different directions, jumping and landing, combining various locomotor (movement by the feet), non-locomotor (stationary movement), and manipulative skills (throwing a ball). Students will demonstrate skills of chasing, dodging, and fleeing. In addition, activities involving rolling, balancing and weight transfer, kicking and punting, and throwing and catching provide opportunities for both fine and gross motor skill development.

Students are provided experiences in both working independently on a task and working cooperatively with a partner or in a small group. The concepts of fitness and personal and social development are introduced, practiced, and promoted as life-long activities.

Spanish

In the newly-revised curriculum, there is connection to the National and State World Language standards, a spiraled content from Grade 1 to 6, and an integration of the target language and culture. The standards which drive the curriculum are linked to assessment tools used to measure student progress and adjust instruction. Content strands are introduced and developed over the sequence of the instruction so that the students can advance their communication skills in the target language.

In Grade 1, students will recognize, identify and/or use basic greetings, the alphabet, basic interpersonal questions related to name, condition and age, colors, adjectives of description, shapes, numbers 1-10, classroom objects, fruits, days of the week, seasons of the year and family members.

Music

Our Music program engages students in a variety of musical activities such as playing instruments, singing, critical listening, movement, and dance. Through these activities and performances, students will have opportunities for self-expression, creativity, cross-curricular connections and appreciation for others. Fostering a life-long enjoyment of music is a common goal throughout the district. Some of the concepts explored are: pitch matching, solo/group, grade level rhythms, fast and slow, verse-chorus, composer/conductor, instruments of the orchestra, playing a variety of percussion instruments, and singing with appropriate dynamics (piano/forte).

Art

The Orange Elementary School Art Program provides students in Grade 1 with opportunities to create and respond with understanding to the visual arts. Students will gain a lifelong appreciation for the visual arts by developing art skills as well as an understanding of how the arts help express the human experience. Students will be introduced to the relation of the visual arts to history and cultures, will use a variety of art techniques and processes, will make connections to academic subjects, and will be able to evaluate their own and each other's work.

Students in the first grade will explore the elements of art and principles of design including line, color, shape, form, texture, variety, and pattern. Their individual creativity will be encouraged as they learn the basics of drawing and painting with a variety of media including crayons, pencils, markers, and brushes, as well as create three-dimensional art using clay and paper. First graders will be introduced to famous artists and art styles. Concepts of color theory, symmetry, positive and negative space, and perspective will be reinforced, as well as art processes like collage, printmaking, and hand-building. Safety and proper usage of materials will be taught in a fun environment where all students will feel challenged and supported.

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Orange Public Schools
Orange, Connecticut

